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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

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NTO

NO: 539, April 3, 6 p.m.

SENT DEPARTMENT 539; REPEATED INFORMATION OSLO 16, COPENHAGEN 16,
STOCKHOLM 20, MOSCOW UNNUMBERED.

IZVESTIA's article criticizing growing militarism in Finland appeared in Finnish press March 27. Editorial comment on it has tended to refute this article and to comment on Bulganin letters to Norway and Denmark at same time. Prevailing attitude in editorials is that Soviet charges against Finland are untrue exaggerated or based on misunderstanding. The adjective preposterous has been used more than once. Secondary reaction is of injured innocence verging on sarcasm. No inclination to defy Soviets but comments on whole problem (including letters to Oslo and Copenhagen) not as cautious as I would have expected. Full digest press comment being airpouched.

In private conversation a number of Finns have told me that they regard IZVESTIA's article as one of the periodic press warnings from Moscow to remind Finns that they are under constant scrutiny. It is pointed out that the Finns have come to expect one or two such press articles a year and that it has been sometime since last one appeared and much has happened since then. Finns say that they are accustomed to taking these warnings in stride. One of things complained of in IZVESTIA's article was large number of war decorations being awarded in Finland. Interestingly enough another batch of such decorations was awarded last Sunday four days after article was published in Finland.

Finns have derive comfort from fact that all four northern countries are now being criticized by Moscow. A Foreign Ministry official commented to Embassy Counselor that "silver lining in rather small cloud" of IZVESTIA article was that Soviets had included Finland in their show of irritation at northern countries and had thus counted Finland as a northern country. Commenting on poor timing article, same official said that IZVESTIA's article would necessarily have to be taken into account in Finnish public speeches commemorating signature of 1948 treaty. Diet Speaker Sukselainen leaves today for Moscow heading group of ten Finns to take part in anniversary ceremonies April 6 in Moscow. Danilov of Soviet Ministry Culture coming to Finland heading

Soviet group

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-2- 539, April 3, 6 p.m. from Helsinki

Soviet group to participate in ceremonies being organized by Finnish-Soviet Society in Helsinki.

One Finn commented to Embassy officer that in his opinion the results of Soviet charges in Norway and Denmark would be the exact opposite of what the Soviets wanted and that in Finland nothing would change whatever.

It seems to me that the press attack on Finland is so inconsistent with praise of Finns-Soviet relations in note to Norway that timing of former must have been result of bureaucratic blunder in Kremlin. Thus I think Finns in this instance are in good company by mistake.

Nevertheless in view Finland's real interest Soviet attitude northern countries, subject surely will be discussed Nordic FM Conference here next week but very doubtful that fact or any conclusions reached will be divulged, lest Soviets accuse Finland or entering into political-military discussions with NATO members.

HICKERSON

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